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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEAHLA/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 001219

NOFORN
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2019
TAGS: [EFIN](#) [ETTC](#) [KTFN](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [RP](#) [NL](#)
SUBJECT: NO BASIS FOR REMOVAL OF JOSE SISON'S TERRORIST
DESIGNATION

REF: A. THE HAGUE 309
[1](#)B. MANILA 1204
[1](#)C. MANILA 142
[1](#)D. 2008 MANILA 1795

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S//NF) SUMMARY: Post believes it would be inadvisable for the Government of the Netherlands to remove New People's Army (NPA) leader Jose M. Sison's terrorist designation, as detailed in reftel A. The NPA continues to carry out terrorist attacks against commercial interests, ambushes of police and military patrols, as well as targeted assassinations of Philippine military and police personnel, government officials, and civilians that are estimated to result in more than 200 deaths annually, plus significant economic losses. In Post's view, the NPA remains a serious threat to the country's security, development, and the continued consolidation of democratic institutions. The designation of the NPA as a terrorist organization by the U.S., EU, and others has materially hampered its effectiveness and military capabilities. Post fully concurs with the March 2009 INR assessment that the NPA continues to carry out terrorist activities in the Philippines. END SUMMARY.

Background: NPA Still a Serious Threat

[1](#)2. (S//NF) Post has reviewed reftel A request for information that might counter the European Court of First Instance's possible revocation of NPA leader Jose Maria Sison's designation as a terrorist. As outlined in reftels B and C, forty years after its founding as the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the NPA's numbers have decreased and its military capabilities diminished, but it remains active in disrupting public security and destroying infrastructure of business interests it targets. From its 1980s peak of some 25,000 fighters, the NPA is now estimated to number about 5,000. Despite this reduced presence, NPA ambushes and military encounters claim the lives of an estimated 150 police officers and soldiers per year. Approximately 60 more security personnel, government officials, and civilians identified by the NPA as "informants" are killed via carefully premeditated assassinations. Attacks against commercial interests involving communications and transportation infrastructure result in significant economic losses and occasional deaths. The NPA leadership has also recently admitted to summary killings of its own members during internal purges (reftel B).

[1](#)3. (S//NF) The U.S. and EU designation of the NPA as a terrorist organization has been instrumental in denying the

group access to funding, weapons, and other supplies, degrading their ability to wage war and carry out terrorist attacks. Although he is not so identified on the CPP's own website, most open-source references to the CPP and NPA indicate that Sison remains Chairman of the CPP Central Committee, of which the NPA serves as an armed wing. Removing Sison's designation as a terrorist would have the effect of legitimizing brutal NPA terrorist attacks as a legitimate armed struggle. Reducing pressure on the NPA could bring a resurgence as an even larger threat to the Philippines' security, and an increase in attacks and bloodshed.

Post's Concurrence with Intelligence Community Consensus

¶4. (S//NF) Post concurs fully with the March 2009 Intelligence Community Assessment of the NPA's activities since 2004. Among the Assessment's key points most relevant to the present discussion were the determination that the NPA has conducted numerous premeditated, politically-motivated attacks throughout the Philippines that have killed civilians, police officers, government officials, and politicians, as well as highly damaging attacks on economic targets. The NPA's attacks have included ambushes, raids, assassinations, extortion operations, and kidnappings. The Assessment identifies Jose Maria Sison as the current Chairman of the NPA, and deems it likely that he runs the terrorist NPA organization from the Netherlands.

Comment

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¶5. (S//NF) The absence of new information does not negate the very significant information we have had for some time regarding Sison. There is no statute of limitations for terrorist behavior; even Sison's temporary absence from a key leadership role in the NPA -- if indeed that were the case -- would not mean that he has been rehabilitated. If Sison and the NPA were to reject their past actions and pledge not to engage in such activity again, there might be some grounds for revisiting their designations, but on the contrary they refuse to agree to a ceasefire and continue to carry out kidnappings and killings. Under the circumstances, removal of Sison's terrorist designation is inadvisable.
KENNEY